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ABSTRACT

Hypothesizing that the tendency to define postmodern culture negatively derives from overliteral and undercritical responses to European theorists, this book of essays identifies the wide parameters of postmodernism. The book demonstrates that the literary and artistic temper of the postmodern condition in Europe and America cannot adequately be understood unless the negative generalizations are complemented with the more positive implications of the innovative creative practices characterizing the multimedia experiments of composer John Cage and other avant-garde artists. Some of the 75 footnoted essays in the book are: "Anti-Art or Ante-Art?"; "Deploring/Exploring Hyperspace: Jameson and Cage"; "Beckett, Brecht, and the Groan of the Text"; "Cage and Consumption"; "Postmodernism's Purist Aesthetic"; "Rainer and the Re-turn to Identity"; "Cage, Wolf, and the Re-turn of the Third Alternative"; "Independent Internationalism: Finlay and Lax"; and "Burt, Wendt, and the Positive Parameters of Postmodernism." The essays are meant to encourage the reader/student to consider present practices in a more critical and discriminating manner--postmodern culture requires empirical analysis. (RS)

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